

Navigation Project: Romania-Bulgaria

Name: Improvement of Navigation Conditions on the Romanian-Bulgarian Common Sector of the Danube and accompanying studies ("ISPA 2")

River-Km: 863-375 (488 rkm)

Budget: 2.58 million EUR (technical assistance); project implementation to range from 16-290 million EUR depending on alternative chosen

Beneficiaries: Romanian Ministry of Transport

Implementing body: Belgian-Romanian consulting consortium, led by Technum N.V. (technical assistance)

WWF Position

- An effective monitoring programme must be implemented, with results obtained and evaluated before the project begins and after each phase of construction. WWF believes that a minimum 6-month pre-construction monitoring is necessary.
- A specific provision in the funding contract is needed to guarantee that optimisation measures are developed and implemented according to the outcomes of the monitoring programme.
- A high-quality and transparent EIA process and study is needed. Mistakes should not be made as in the case of the ISPA 1 project, where content and procedural aspects did not meet legal and accepted standards.
- WWF expects fair and genuine participation in the upcoming EIA public dialogue phase.



Map credit:
Fluvius

Location

The project is located along the Lower Danube, between Iron Gates II dam (rkm 863) and the Romanian city of Călărași (rkm 375), with the Bulgarian city of Silistra directly opposite.

Background

This project is part of Priority Project No. 18¹ and therefore designates this section as one of particular importance for the EU transport networks. Initial project studies have been supported by EU ISPA funds, as opposed to TEN-T funds for other Danube projects.

Project details

The final objective of the river engineering project is to improve

the conditions of the navigation fairway in specified critical sections on the Lower Danube by ensuring a certain water depth.

The initial project activities contracted at this time include the following:

- Feasibility Study
- Environmental Impact Assessment
- Terms of Reference and Cohesion Fund Application for the next phase of project development, i.e. detailed design for the following sections on the Danube River

The project Feasibility Study is currently underway; its aim is to define and identify, compare and analyse various alternatives for the improvement of navigation conditions. A draft of the feasibility study was made public in September 2008. The final draft

¹ http://tentec.europa.eu/en/tentec_projects/30_priority_projects/priority_project_18/priority_project_18.htm

has not been published at this time. The EIA procedure is now in the scoping phase; this was officially announced by the Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Water on their website in February 2009.

The September 2008 feasibility study investigates eight alternatives, including the present “business as usual” alternative. The scenarios vary with respect to the proposed measures to be implemented.

Impact & Conflict

The lower section of the Danube that makes up the Bulgarian-Romanian border is one of the most natural stretches along the river.

Many stretches, containing rich biodiversity, rare bird species and a large number of protected areas are likely to be impacted by the navigation project in various degrees depending on the alternative implemented.

Important habitats on Danube islands (e.g. Persina and Batin) are likely to be directly affected by navigation works. These are habitats mainly located along the river bank or in wetlands in adjoining territories, e.g. riparian flooded willow forests, rivers with muddy banks. The main negative likely impacts are connected to changes in the water levels in the floodplains (and less so on the islands), as a result of unnaturally higher or lower waters and changes in river currents, which all lead to partial drying or flooding of the habitats.

WWF expects fair and genuine participation in the upcoming EIA public dialogue phase, which is expected to begin in June 2010.

Contact

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Links

Romanian Ministry of Transport, Construction and Tourism:
www.mt.ro/engleza/index_eng.html

River Administration of the Lower Danube-Galati:
www.afdj.ro/afdj_en.html

Bulgarian Ministry of Transport:
<http://www.mtc.government.bg/index.php>

WWF DCP Romania:
<http://www.wwf.ro> (Romanian)

WWF DCP Bulgaria:
<http://www.wwf.bg> (Bulgarian)

WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme (regional site in English):
<http://www.panda.org/dcpo>

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